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SOURCE Newspapers as indicated.

SOVIET PRESS COVERAGE OF GREAT CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS
DURING THREE PERIODS IN 1952 AND 1953

As one way of possibly establishing the present intentions of the Government of the USSR with regard to the great construction projects, the space devoted to articles concerning them in four Soviet newspapers over three specific periods has been calculated and tabulated (see appended table) and the content of the articles analyzed for possible changes. The newspapers were Pravda, Leninskoye Znamya, Pravda Ukrainy, and Turkmeneskaya Iskra. They were examined for the second quarter 1952, the second quarter 1953, and for the period from 24 September to 24 October 1952.

These four newspapers were selected for the following reasons: Pravda is the authoritative journal of the Communist Party, Pravda Ukrainy reports on the local aspects of the construction of the Kakhovka Hydroelectric Center, as well as of the South Ukrainian and North Crimean Canals, Turkmenskaya Iskra reports on the construction of the Main Turkmen Canal as a local project, Leninskoye Znaniye was chosen because it is published in Petrozavodsk, an area not immediately affected by the great construction projects. In addition, Leninskoye Znaniye has been noted to report intelligence items on scattered areas in the USSR which are not of immediate concern of Petrozavodsk and its environs.

Since the press for the third quarter 1953 is not yet fully available in FDD, the second quarter 1953 and the comparable period of 1952 were chosen for the survey. The period from 24 September to 24 October 1952 was chosen because the 19th Party Congress met during that time and its tasks were discussed for 2 weeks before and after the actual meeting of the congress.

An analysis of the contents of the articles published in all four newspapers during the three periods does not reveal any reversion or change in the decision to build the construction projects. The only possible exception is the Main Turkmen Canal, which is discussed below in connection with an analysis of the space allotted.

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With seasonal variations, the articles discuss in the same tone during the three periods planned and accomplished work, names of outstanding workers, results of socialist competition prior to national holidays and anniversaries, some shortcomings, equipment received at construction sites from certain plants, reduction of costs, and the benefits the projects will bring when they are completed.

As the appended table shows, however, the amount of space allotted to the projects, except Kuybyshev, was sharply reduced in the second quarter 1953, as compared to the second quarter 1952. The reason Kuybyshev continues to receive coverage is probably that it is closest to completion. It is to be finished in 1955.

The following reasons or combinations of reasons are suggested to explain the reduction of space devoted to the projects as a whole.

1. In 1952, most of the work was of a preliminary nature, such as expeditions, surveys, exploratory work, etc., which the Soviet press usually reports together with the historical background in great detail and with many repetitions for propaganda purposes. In 1953, the press reports narrowed down to actual construction work, of which there was not much to report.

2. Since Stalin's death the press has devoted far more space to topics of more immediate concern to the people, such as production of consumers' goods, the opening of stores, etc., and to international news than to the construction of a communist society in the distant future. Since Soviet newspapers are usually limited to 4 pages it may have been decided to sacrifice press coverage of the great construction projects, except Kuybyshev, which is closest to completion.

3. The reduction in space may actually reflect an abandonment of the great construction projects temporarily or permanently due to shortages of materials and labor. Except in the case of the Main Turkmen Canal, this seems unlikely and the first two reasons appear to be more likely explanations. It may be added here that the order of priority for building the projects is as follows: (1) the Kuybyshev and Kakhovka Hydroelectric Centers, (2) the Stalingrad Hydroelectric Center and the South Ukrainian and North Crimean Canals, and (3) the Main Turkmen Canal.

The complete lack of coverage given to the Main Turkmen Canal in 1953 plus an article published in Pravda on 19 June 1952 would suggest rather strongly that the work on the Main Turkmen Canal has slowed down or even been abandoned at least temporarily. The Pravda article, which was written by S. Kalizhnyuk, chief of the Main Turkmen Canal construction, elaborates on the great difficulties faced by the builders of the canal.

Kalizhnyuk pointed out that tens of millions of cubic meters of lumber, over one million tons of steel, and over 2 million tons of cement will be required to complete the project, which includes the creation of one of the largest cotton growing areas in the USSR and of industrial centers in the lower Amu-Dar'ya area and in Western Turkmenia. He stated that transportation of these materials will require a tremendous number of railroad cars, and that the manufacture and transportation of the materials will require a great outlay of funds.

Kalizhnyuk declared that not less than 1.5 million cubic meters of concrete must be placed each year in 1953 and 1954. He revealed that the total output of all the cement plants in Central Asia cannot meet this demand, and that, consequently, new cement plants are to be built in the region of the planned canal. He stated, however, that this had not yet been done.

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Furthermore, Kalizhnyuk pointed out many other difficulties and problems which must be solved quickly if the work is to be carried out. He mentioned an acute shortage of any kind of fuel (which among other things curtails the local manufacture of bricks), the absence of suitable raw materials for construction in the locality of the canal, and the necessity for working out substitutes, for which scientific help was still being awaited.

The Main Turkmen Canal construction may have encountered additional difficulties. There is a possibility that the amnesty given by the Malenkov government robbed the Main Turkmen Canal construction of its slave labor. Furthermore, the inferior living and working conditions at the construction sites, where in some cases drinking water is brought in by plane, do not offer much attraction for workers. Conceivably, workers might have left the construction after Stalin's death if a relaxation of regulations occurred.

The prohibitive cost of the construction and other difficulties pointed out by Kalizhnyuk, together with the possible labor troubles described above, might have compelled the Soviet government to slow down the work or to stop it completely, at least temporarily.

Newspaper Space Allotted to Construction Projects
(in inches)

	Second Quarter 1952	Second Quarter 1953	Party Conference Period, 24 Sep - 24 Oct 1952	Total
<u>Kakhovka Hydroelectric Center</u>				
Turkmenskaya Iskra	4	3	0	7
Leninskoye Znamya	39	13	3	55
Pravda Ukrainy	285	84	14	383
Pravda	42	80	5	127
Total	370	180	22	572
<u>Kuybyshev Hydroelectric Center</u>				
Turkmenskaya Iskra	54	32	0	86
Leninskoye Znamya	33	105	29	167
Pravda Ukrainy	28	12	4	44
Pravda	57	73	15	145
Total	172	222	48	442
<u>Stalingrad Hydroelectric Center</u>				
Turkmenskaya Iskra	126	0	0	126
Leninskoye Znamya	22	21	4	47

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	Second Quarter 1952	Second Quarter 1953	Party Conference Period, 24 Sep - 24 Oct 1952	Total
Pravda Ukrainy	10	3	0	13
Pravda	54	46	7	107
Total	212	70	11	293

Main Turkmen Canal

Turkmenskaya Iskra	821	0	131	952
Leninskoye Znamya	149	0	15	164
Pravda Ukrainy	30	0	0	30
Pravda	85	0	39	124
Total	1,085	0	185	1,270

South Ukrainian and North
Crimean Canals

Turkmenskaya Iskra	121	0	0	121
Leninskoye Znamya	7	0	0	7
Pravda Ukrainy	225	45	0	270
Pravda	45	0	0	45
Total	398	45	0	443
Grand Total	2,237	517	266	3,020

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